

Bipolar Youth Action Project

Organization: Stigma-Free Society, formerly Bipolar Disorder Society of BC (Victoria, BC)

Lead Participant: Andrea Paquette



The Bipolar Youth Action Project (BYAP) aimed to improve the capacity of youth living with mental illness to engage in and facilitate research and knowledge exchange, and that of academic and community partners who work with them. BYAP focussed on engaging youth living with bipolar disorder in participatory research and identifying youth-specific self-management strategies for managing the condition. More specifically, a Youth Action Group (YAG) was established and trained in research methods. The YAG then conducted two Research Forums. The first Forum examined creating a venue for mutual learning and knowledge exchange and consultations within a community-based participatory research framework and the second Forum identified the best methods for sharing the knowledge gathered in first Forum. The YAG then developed a plan to share the knowledge gained using youth appropriate outputs that could be shared peer-to-peer. Please visit <http://stigmafreezone.com/bipolar-youth-action-project/> for more information and to view BYAP's Key Messages Video.

"SPARK is an innovative and unique opportunity and I benefited greatly from the education. I found that I was challenged to think of my project in new ways and learned to truly focus in on knowledge translation, which was something that I had not considered before. SPARK helped focus my thoughts and greatly contributed to the findings of the Bipolar Youth Action Project. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to have new learnings and SPARK is an experience that I will never forget for it has benefited me in many aspects of my work going forward."

- Andrea Paquette, CEO, Stigma-Free Society

Andrea Paquette is the Executive Director at Stigma-Free Society and who lives well with bipolar disorder having been diagnosed for over 14 years. Andrea created the Bipolar Babe website and her blog and began speaking to students, non-profit organizations, doctors, nurses and other groups and started a number of programs, including Teens2Twenties.

To learn more information about this project or the SPARK program, please contact spark@mentalhealthcommission.ca.